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Inside Information

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INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Individual Items are sent electronically throughout the month to offices on the agricultural information network on the Dialcom Incorporated computer system. These items are then printed at the end of the month for distribution to all offices, including those which do not have access to the Dialcom mail network. Any items, comments or inquiries should be sent to Denver Browning, Editor, Public Liaison, Office of Public Affairs, Room 102A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send to Browning's Dialcom mailbox AGR209, or call at (202) 447-2058. Communicators with USDA agencies, Land-Grant Universities and State Departments of Agriculture are encouraged to submit items to the editor for inclusion in both the electronic and printed versions.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although timely in the electronic version, some job announcements may reach you too late in hard copy due to the shortness of deadlines. Our policy is to include all electronic items in the end-of-month hard copy.

SEVERAL STATE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE NAME NEW COMMUNICATION OFFICERS

Several state departments of agriculture have named new communication officers in recent weeks, according to the most recent issue of the COSDA COURIER, newsletter of the Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture.

Carl DeWing is the new communications officer at the California Department of Food and Agriculture. He succeeds Jan Wessell, who left CDFA earlier in the year. DeWing spent 31 years in radio and television news before going to work for state government.

Michelle McLawhorn is the new public information administrator at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. A reorganized Bureau of Information, Education and Research Services continues to be headed by Charlie Allen, longtime FDACS communication officer.

Ellen Grant is the new public information officer at the Illinois Department of Agriculture. She succeeds Mark Randal who returned to broadcast news work earlier this year. Grant also has a broadcasting and public relations background.

Amy O'Marro is handling media relations for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Patrick Motherway had been the director of communications. O'Marro previously was an editor with a chain of suburban newspapers in Minnesota and was media director with the Colorado state legislature.

Ted Quanrud is the new public information specialist with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture. He succeeds Ellen Crawford who transferred to another state agency. Quanrud was editorial page editor of the Bismarck TRIBUNE.

Carla Moore is the new chief of communications at the Ohio Department of Agriculture. She succeeds Alice Walters who became public relations director for an Ohio advertising agency. Moore had served as promotions and communications director for the Ohio Pork Producers Council.

Rosanna Salazar is the new assistant commissioner for communications at the Texas Department of Agriculture. Katie Dickie is the new assistant commissioner for public information.

Recent departures include Kathie Johnson who left her position as public information officer for the Idaho Department of Agriculture to work full time on IDA's Leadership Idaho Agriculture and Ag In the Classroom programs. No successor has been named.

Susan Harlowe, communications officer with the Vermont Department of Agriculture, left when the position was cut in a budget reduction.

RETIRED WRITER AND EDITOR WITH USDA'S AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE DIES

Donald Victor Robertson, retired writer and technical editor with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, died on July 31 of cardiopulmonary arrest. He was 68.

Robertson, a graduate of the University of Maryland, served in the Navy in the South Pacific in World War II and then worked for an engineering firm before joining USDA. In later years he also taught writing at USDA's Graduate School and at the University of Maryland Adult Education Center.

After retiring from USDA in 1976, Robertson was a freelance editor with Time-Life Books. He was a member of the Anne Arundel Watermen's Association, a member of the Maryland Watermen's Association and a contributor to its newsletter, and a past member of the Fleet Reserve Club in Annapolis.

Robertson is survived by his wife, Emilie, four daughters, and five grandchildren.

USDA'S OPA REPORTS RESULTS OF TWO ELECTRONIC NEWSCLIPPING SERVICES STUDY

USDA's Office of Public Affairs has reported on its 2-week study of two electronic news clipping services—NewsNet of Bryn Mawr, PA, and BT North America Dialcom Service of Reston, VA.

Results will be used by OPA and various agency information offices in deciding which service to use next fiscal year. OPA's News Division currently uses "NewsTab," the automatic newsclipping feature, provided by BTNA Dialcom in gathering news for briefing into the daily "AG a.m." news summary.

With the end of the USDA contract with BTNA for its Dialcom services on September 30, and transition to the federal FTS2000MAIL service provided by AT&T, the question arose how would the News Division and agencies access the newswires? Having instant, electronic access to newswire stories is vital to OPA and many agencies in their information gathering functions.

The comparative study of the automatic newsclipping features of the two services showed that NewsNet through its "NewsFlash" feature will provide a third more newsclips than Dialcom's "NewsTab." That's

because NewsNet has three additional news wires and a few hundred newsletters on the system. However, NewsNet's automatic clipping service costs are somewhat higher than Dialcom's, even when comparing the results from identical wire services.

Dialcom provides access to and can automatically clip AP, UPI, Reuters, PR Newswire and Business Wire. In addition, NewsNet offers Agence France- Press International, Xinhua English Language News Service, and JiJi Press Ticker Service. NewsNet also carries nearly 500 daily, weekly and monthly newsletters. Dialcom has UPI state stories and the OPEC News Service which NewsNet does not offer.

Most agencies are more interested in a comparison of occasional, ad hoc access to the newswires. Both systems allow a user to search all of the news files by the use of keywords or search terms at any time.

A major drawback of the Dialcom service is that the system purges all of its newswire files at midnight each Thursday. Therefore, it is impossible to locate any story previous to midnight of the most recent Thursday. This can be a handicap on Fridays when one is interested in a story carried on the wires a day or two earlier.

NewsNet retains all newswire stories for 10 full weeks. Oldest day's stories are purged when latest day's wires are filed. This can be of real value to someone searching not just for a story of the past week, but for coverage of a certain subject by newswires for the past several weeks.

Also, NewsNet allows one to search all wires at one time with a keyword or multiple keywords for a quick check. Dialcom requires a keyword search of one newswire at a time, which can be time consuming if one is interested in checking all of the wires.

Based on an analysis of the results of the 2-week use of NewsNet and compared with use of BTNA Dialcom during the same period, Dialcom is the less expensive of the two. This is particularly true when using the automatic clipping service full time. But NewsNet is the more comprehensive service and much more efficient when accessing on an ad hoc basis.

Those who want more information about each service, may contact John McCarthy, BTNA Federal Systems, 2100 Reston Parkway, Reston, VA 22091, or Dialcom e-mail 98:JMCarthy, or telephone 703-715-7154, and Marilyn Hughes, Customer Relations, NewsNet Inc., 945 Haverford Road, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, or telephone 800-345-1301 or 215-527-8030.

NEW BOOK ON HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE SERVICE PUBLISHED BY USDA

USDA has published a new book, "Farmers, Cooperatives, and USDA: A History of Agricultural Cooperative Service," by Wayne Rasmussen, retired USDA historian.

The 291-page study discusses American cooperatives from their inception to the present, telling how they are organized and how they function.

Readers can glean from the book how a governmental service-oriented program can augment a stronger and more prosperous production agriculture and rural America.

The book details the evolution of policy under the various administrations responsible for implementing the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926.

Copies of the book may be purchased by the public from the Agricultural Cooperative Service. Send check or money order (\$15.95 for hardcover; \$12.95 for paperback), payable to Agricultural Cooperative Service, to ACS-USDA, P.O. Box 96576, Washington, DC 20090-6576.

Review copies, for communicators only, are available from George Martin, Information Services Staff, ACS, Room 4209-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. His telephone is 202-245-5383.

WILL FTS2000MAIL RESURRECT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK AMONG AG COMMUNICATORS?

During the mid to latter 1980s, agricultural communicators in USDA, land grant universities, state departments of agriculture, and some with other organizations were linked through one common electronic mail system under the cooperative leadership of USDA's Office of Public Affairs and the Extension Service.

The e-mail network provided by the office automation services of Dialcom Inc. (now owned by British Telecom North America) was the electronic means by which the ag communicators communicated with each other and by which they all could tap into the latest press releases issued by USDA. The biggest draw, by far, was OPA's daily news summary, "AG a.m."

But in 1989, the network disintegrated. Extension Service and State Cooperative Extension Systems migrated to Internet and other computerized systems. Some other USDA agencies' information offices switched

to the SprintMail (Telemail) system. Some state departments of agriculture stopped using any e-mail system altogether.

With the advent of FTS2000 electronic mail later this year, mandated by law for federal agencies, there will be an opportunity to "re-link" agricultural communicators once again, says Stan Prochaska, senior public affairs specialist with OPA's information technology management staff. USDA will be part of the FTS2000MAIL network "A" provided by AT&T's electronic mail service.

Through "X.400" gateways, FTS2000MAIL users will be able to send messages to anyone from their AT&T e-mail box to those using BTNA Dialcom, SprintMail, MCI Mail, Internet, and others. In addition, X.400 gateways are planned between agencies' internal e-mail systems and FTS200MAIL. Such a gateway already exists between Forest Service's CC:Mail on its Data General System and FTS2000MAIL.

OPA is conducting a survey of all USDA agencies' information offices to gather FTS2000MAIL and internal system user IDs. A survey of land grant university and state department of agriculture information offices to gather e-mail system userIDs also is planned.

This information will be used to develop an e-mail user directory for the new public affairs network. The directory will be available online as a "shared list" on the AT&T system. OPA will maintain it.

"The user IDs also will become part of the 'How to Get Information from USDA' directory next time it is updated," Prochaska said. The online directory on the FTS2000MAIL system (AT&T) should be ready for access around October 1.

Electronic mail is the fastest, surest way of delivering communications, according to Prochaska. He cited a recent check of INSIDE INFORMATION delivery via Dialcom e-mail.

Twelve percent of the recipients received and read the message within 3 hours—the first day—after it was sent at 2:45 p.m. EDT. Nearly 70 percent read it before the end of the second day.

"It's not unusual to see e-mail messages read within 15 minutes after transmittal," Prochaska said. "And then they can be forwarded quickly and efficiently, with comments, to someone else on the system or to another e-mail system."

Time zone barriers are reduced with e-mail. The recent check showed several users read the INSIDE INFORMATION article after 5 p.m. Eastern time. One California user read at 7:51 p.m. EDT (4:51 Pacific time). Early starters also tend to check their e-mail first thing in the morning: 6:54, 7:11, 7:17, 7:37 a.m. were some examples.

Ardent e-mail users cite avoidance of the telephone tag problem in trying to communicate telephonically. And, delays in regular postal mail go without comment.

Anyone with comments or questions about FTS2000MAIL and the agricultural communicators' electronic network may contact Stan Prochaska through Dialcom e-mail address 57:AGR002 or PROCHASKA.S, Sprint-Mail address SPROCHASKA, or FTS2000MAIL address !A13SPROCHASKA. His telephone number is 202-447-7454.

USDA-OPA'S DESIGN DIVISION HAS AN OPENING FOR A VISUAL INFORMATION SPECIALIST

The Office of Publishing & Visual Communication in USDA's Office of Public Affairs, has an opening for a GM-1084-13 visual information specialist in its Design Division.

Responsibilities include the development, design, and coordinating fabrication, installation, and showing of USDA exhibits and includes the development of cost plans.

Requirements include experience which is in or directly related to the line of work of the position; ability to manage and execute complex visual projects which include graphic design, exhibit design, illustration, layouts, fabrication, and electronic desk top publishing; and a working familiarity with USDA agencies and their information programs.

To apply, contact: Laura Farrior (202-447-5833), USDA, Office of Personnel, PO, Room 27-W, Washington, DC 20250.

Closing date is September 4.

MISSOURI EXTENSION SPONSORING UPCOMING FOOD, HEALTH AND NUTRITION CONFERENCE

"Toward Better Health: Trends and Truths at the American Table," will be held September 16 and 17 at the Airport Marriott Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. The conference, sponsored by University Extension and the Missouri Department of Health, will focus on dietary fats and cholesterol, the effect of genetics on health and nutrition, and issues in cholesterol screening and treatment for youth.

The second part of the conference program includes a look at foods of the future, a food forecast for the year 2001, and sessions on the market-driven design of foods and designing foods from plant and animal sources, fats and oils. The luncheons both days will tie into the conference theme, featuring changing food trends and future foods.

Two post-conference workshops on the afternoon of September 17 will include "The 10 Commandments of Good Newspaper Writing" by Harry Levins, the writing coach of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and a panel report for pediatric nutritionists on the implications of blood cholesterol levels in children and adolescents.

The registration fee of \$50 includes meals and materials. For more information or to register, contact University Extension Conference Office, 348 Hearn Center, Columbia, MO 65211. Telephone is 314-882-8320.

SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TAKING PLACE AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Fred Poston, formerly Director of Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service (CES), has accepted the position of Vice Provost and Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University, effective August 1.

Gail Imig is the new Cooperative Extension Service Director at Michigan State University, effective July 1. Imig was previously Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs - University Extension and Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Missouri.

Michael Tate, who was serving as Acting Interim Director for Michigan CES, has returned to his position as Associate Director, 4-H Youth Programs.

For more information, call Mary Harvey, Outreach Communications, CES, Michigan State University, 517-336-1555.

TELECONFERENCE ON NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE AMERICAS IS OCTOBER 17

The Second International Teleconference on Natural Resources Management in the Americas will be held on Thursday, October 17 at 11 a.m. ET. "The Role of Indigenous Peoples in the Future of Sustainable Development" is the theme this year.

Several presenters with related expertise or work experience will showcase on-going projects in which indigenous groups are involved in sustainable development throughout the Americas. Projects to be featured include: native peoples ethnopharmacology, political organization, and international action related to natural resources management.

Last year 12 experts representing the Inter-American Development Bank, Smithsonian Institution, Stone Container Corporation, and the governments of Costa Rica, Brazil, and others, described successful efforts to save tropical rain forests in the hemisphere. Reaction from 53 domestic and 15 overseas sites was overwhelmingly favorable.

For more information, contact: NUTN (National University Teleconference Network) at 405-744-5191, or Jake Carvey, California Polytechnic University at 805-756-2211.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HAS NEW PUBLICATION ON PREPARING VISUAL PRESENTATIONS

The University of California Cooperative Extension has a new publication called "Planning and Preparing Visual Presentations for Large Audiences."

The publication is directed towards people who must plan and design their visualized talks when making presentations to large audiences and may have to handle their own equipment or work with minimal assistance.

It should be useful for anyone who has had limited experience making public presentations in front of large audiences or to anyone who would like to increase their effectiveness with visual aids in their presentations.

Topics included are: advantages and disadvantages of different types of visuals, planning a visual presentation, visual design considerations, pre-departure checklists, equipment set-up and operation, and resources.

Cost of the publication is \$2.00. Make check payable to UC Regents, and mail to: Agricultural Information and Publications, University of California, Davis, CA 95616.

OHIO STATE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE TO PRESENT NEW SATELLITE TV PROGRAM

The Ohio State Cooperative Extension Service, Ohio 4-H Program, and the College of Human Ecology will present a satellite TV program, "Building Coalitions," on Thursday, September 12. The program airs from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. ET, with a Test Pattern at 7:15 p.m., on Westar 4, Channel 10.

"Building Coalitions" will show you how to improve your efforts of helping young people by working with other youth agencies.

Most Ohio county Extension offices have built community coalitions to better meet the needs of young people. You can watch and listen to their efforts and learn how to multiply yours.

The show will features a panel discussion and time for call-in questions. Other topics covered include: the roles and functions of coalitions in youth programming; the differences between networks, alliances, collaborations and coalitions; and working together to address at-risk-youth issues.

For information on program content, contact Richard Clark, 614-292-0202. For technical information, contact Randy Spears, 614-292-2011.

USDA'S COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION DELIVERY SERVICE COST CONTINUES TO DECLINE

There's a growing demand for information online. Data Transmission Network, an online vendor with about 55,000 subscribers, now offers 120 pages of online data to farmers and others for \$20 per month. Farm Data II, produced by Farm Land and Pioneer Hi-Bred, will enter that market soon by offering 190 pages of full color graphics and text for even less.

Use of USDA's online CID (Computerized Information Delivery) Service for the first eight months of this fiscal year shows significant growth and declining costs.

The 11 USDA agencies distributing information through CID loaded 70,011 (5%) less lines of information for the eight-month period than for the same period last fiscal year. However, subscribers retrieved 699,618 (11%) more lines of data this year than last.

Total lines retrieved in the eight-month period this fiscal year was almost 7 million, more than 127 thousand pages of single spaced data—or the textual equivalent of 255 Stephen King thrillers.

OPA, distributing press releases and reports from USDA agencies, loaded 11% (12,414 lines) less information for the period but subscribers used 8% (87,031 lines) more data.

Cost continues to decline, though USDA gets more pickup. OPA, for the first eight months of this fiscal year, paid \$1,197 (30%) less than last year to distribute its information through CID. USDA as a whole sees a similar cost decline.

But that's only the beginning of the story. About 35 subscribers on the service are news and information services that distribute the information to their own subscribers, who often number in the hundreds or thousands.

In the case of OPA, agency information OPA distributed was picked up during those eight months and redistributed by AgriData News Service (with hundreds of online subscribers), American Farm Bureau (with its ACRES online service), Bonneville Telecommunications (2,000 online subscribers), California Agricultural Technology Institute (3,000 online subscribers), Leidahl Communications (which among other things FAXes releases to its subscribers), Little Electronics (publishers), Master Productions (online service), Oster communications (100,000 online and other subscribers), Pioneer Hi-Bred (a world-wide information service), Sosland Publishing, Stat Publishing, the Ceres Network (online service), the Cheese Reporter, Communications Providers (online service), Doane Information Systems (5,000 online subscribers) and Intellibank Corporation (online service).

Others picking it up were universities of Ark., S.C, Ky., Pa., and Virginia Tech, which distributes it to every county Extension office in Virginia. And departments of agriculture of Ala., Colo., Hawaii, Idaho., Ill., Ky., Miss., N.Y., Okla., Pa., Tenn., Va. and Washington also picked up the reports released by OPA.

Additional retrievers of the same information were the U.S. Senate, Farm Credit Council, TVA, Federal Reserve Banks, Voice of America, and dozens of other firms and corporations, such as the Rice Millers, United Grain, Consolidated Grain, Louis Dreyfus, and Paine Webber.

U. OF ILL. OFFERING NEW LITERATURE SEARCHING SERVICE AT DOCUMENTATION CENTER

Finding information about agricultural communications has been a serious problem for researchers, educators, practitioners, and students in this field. Although considerable literature about the subject exists, its scatter and lack of organization have made literature search time-consuming and inefficient.

The Agricultural Communications Documentation Center at the University of Illinois has developed a specialized collection and is offering it for public use. The computer-based information system contains over 10,400 agricultural communications citations from more than 90 countries and areas. It involves more than 25 languages, extends from the late 1800s to date, and takes forms from books to unpublished letters. The Center also owns most of the original documents.

The Center hosts several unique collections, including the archive from National Association of Farm Broadcasters, collections from International Program for Agricultural Knowledge Systems (INTERPAKS) and personal collections from John Behrens, Mason Miller, Harold Swanson, and others.

Over 40 percent of the documents in the Center are not included in AGRICOLA or CAB databases.

Literature in the collection covers theory as well as practice, includes opinions as well as empirical research, and encompasses mass media as well as personal communications methods.

For more information about the service or the database, contact: Win-Yuan Shih, Coordinator, Agricultural Communications Documentation Center, Office of Agricultural Communications and Education, University of Illinois, 58 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801. Telephone is 217-333-4780. FAX is 217-333-1952.

FOUR PUBLICATIONS FROM USDA'S ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE RECEIVE AAEA AWARD

A set of four briefing booklets from USDA's Economic Research Service received a Quality of Communication Award from the American Agricultural Economic Association (AAEA) in Manhattan, Kansas, August 6.

The booklets are "The Basic Mechanisms of Japanese Farm Policy," by William T. Coyle and William J. Hudson; "The Basic Mechanisms of European Community (EC) Farm Policy," by Walter H. Gardiner and William J. Hudson; and long- and short-form booklets entitled "Multilateral Trade Reform: What the GATT Negotiations Mean to U.S. Agriculture," by Stephen L. Magiera, Michael T. Herlihy, William J. Hudson, and Jonathan Harsch. The following is the AAEA jury's award citation:

The ERS briefing booklets represent an innovative approach to conveying information about complex economic issues. They make extremely effective use of graphical presentations to make issues quickly and clearly understandable.

The first two booklets provide an overview of Japanese and European Community agricultural structure and policy. The third and fourth booklets provide a concise summary of economic trends in U.S. agriculture and outline major policy alternatives. They strongly make the case that U.S. farmers will benefit from a GATT agreement.

Overall, the four booklets provide an innovative overview of some of today's most important agricultural trade policy issues. They represent a very useful public policy education tool.

For more information about contents of the booklets, contact Jim Sayre at 202-219-0512.

To order the package of four publications, call the toll free order desk, 1-800-999-6779. Refer to number PKG-7. The cost is \$16.50.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING COMMUNICATION EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

September 17:

SIGCAT (CD-ROM SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP) MEETING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 14TH ANNUAL FEDERAL COMPUTER CONFERENCE (9/17-19)

Washington Convention Center, Room 15, Washington, D.C.

Contact: E.J. (Jerry) McFaul, 703-648-4452

October 27:

COMMUNICATION OFFICERS OF STATE DEPTS. OF AGRICULTURE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Great Southern Hotel, Columbus, Ohio

Contact: Alice Walters, COSDA President, 614-466-8798

November 4:

BUSINESS GRAMMAR AND USAGE FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKSHOPS

Venice Inn, Hagerstown, Maryland (November 4)

Ramada Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland (November 5)

Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, D.C. (November 6)

Johnny Appleseed Inn, Fredericksburg, Virginia (November 7)

Marriott Crystal Gateway, Arlington, Virginia (November 8)

Hawaiian Regent Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii (November 26)

Contact: National Seminars Group, 1-800-258-7246

December 4:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS CONFERENCE

Westpark Hotel, Arlington, Virginia

Contact: 703-519-3902
